

Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Providence Mayor Elorza to Speak at Our Meeting Sustainability and Our City - Sunday February 28, Coffee Hour Please Tell People to Come

Mayor Elorza's office very recently confirmed that the mayor will be coming to speak at our meetinghouse on February 28, on the topic of sustainability. The speech is part of our Peace and Social Concerns Committee's regular speaker series, which endeavors to get speakers to talk on subjects falling within the committee's scope and seen as important to our broader community, with the goal of inspiring members of our community to take action of some sort in regard to the topic.

Noting that the city has an Office of Sustainability, the mayor's office was contacted by John Gaffney as a member of our Peace and Social Concerns Committee. These talks are generally scheduled for the third Sunday of certain months, but in this case the schedule worked out to be the fourth Sunday, February 28.

The Mayor's schedule is such that he cannot commit to many things very far in advance, which is why we were just given the ok for this, leaving not too much time to get the word out. It would be good for us to have a full audience in order to make the mayor feel welcome and also appreciative of an opportunity to reach a wide audience on this important topic. *(cont p 6)*

Annual State of the Society Report Preparatory Worship Sharing Providence Meetinghouse – noon, Sunday February 21 (was 28)

Worship sharing will take place at noon on Sunday February 21 at the Providence Meetinghouse in preparation for our annual State of the Society report. *Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting* (page 244) states that this report:

"...should be a searching self-examination by the meeting and its members of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses and of the efforts made *(cont p 7)*

Islamophobia Examined – Meeting Wed. Feb 24, 6pm with Dr. Umer Akbar and Imam Farid Ansari (please rsvp if possible)

Continuing with concerns expressed by a variety of people in our meeting about the current attitudes about the Islamic faith, Jen McFadden has this update for our nascent "anti-Islamophobia working group".

Dr. Umer Akbar will join us on Wednesday, Feb. 24 at 6 pm for a first meeting about a possible speaker series and/or other interfaith efforts to address the problem of Islamophobia. I'm also very pleased to report that Imam Farid Ansari of the Muslim American Da'wah Center of Rhode Island will also be able to attend. Both of these men have been very active in community outreach and interfaith efforts throughout Rhode Island and elsewhere, and I'm really looking forward to hearing their thoughts and ideas about how we can come together to promote peace and facilitate understanding. *(cont p 6)*

(Published Feb 9)

Calendar (also see p 4 Events)

Feb 14 Sun: 11:45am Meeting For Business, Providence Meeting House

Feb 20 Sat: 10am-12pm Saylesville Bookswap

Feb 21 Sun: Noon State of the Society Worship sharing, Providence Meeting House (p1)

Feb 24 Wed: 6pm Islamophobia event/potluck Providence Meeting House (p1)

Feb 25 Thur: 7pm Moses Brown Middle School Musical, MB Alumni Hall

Feb 28 Sun: Coffee hour (11:30-ish) Mayor Elorza talks about sustainability, Providence Meeting House (p1)

Feb 28 Sun: 3-6pm Sacred Harp Sing at Providence Meeting House

Mar 13 Sun: 11:45am Meeting For Business, Providence Meeting House

Mar 19 Sat: 10am-12pm Saylesville Bookswap

Mar 27 Sun: 3-6pm Sacred Harp Sing at Providence Meeting House

**Providence Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
Minutes – 10th First Month, 2016**

1. We gathered at 11:45 am at the Providence meetinghouse, with 22 present for all or part of the meeting. In the opening worship, the clerk read the following query from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice:

Do I consider prayerfully the many concerns that are lifted up on any issue, acknowledging that the search for truth in unity involves what God requires, being open to personal transformation as the community arrives at the sense of the meeting?

2. Announcements: The meeting is hosting a potluck supper and program with Arthur Larrabee on Friday, January 22, at 5:30pm at the Providence meetinghouse. He will lead a discussion on "Key Concepts in Quaker Decision-Making."

3. Application for NEYM Legacy Fund Grant: On behalf of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, Mark Conley spoke to a proposal that has come through the committee, asking Providence Meeting to support and endorse an application to the NEYM "Future Fund," part of the Legacy Fund resulting from sale of the New England Friends Home, on behalf of our members Paul Klinkman and Liberty Goodwin. Mark reviewed the yearly meeting's guidelines for grants, including the need for endorsement by a monthly meeting (or other Quaker group). Paul and Liberty first raised this possibility several months ago (see 11th mo. Minute 8). After much deliberation and a meeting with Paul and Liberty, the P&SC Committee united on the following minute:

After three months of dialogue with the applicants and consideration of their proposal, we on the Peace and Social Concerns Committee believe Paul Klinkman's and Liberty Goodwin's proposal to be worthy of consideration and recommend that Meeting for Business write the required letter of support for the grant proposal. We do this in particular recognition of the Legacy Grant's request for proposals that may bear witness to work in the field of climate change. We recognize our lack of knowledge regarding the technical or fiduciary feasibility of this project. Nonetheless, we commend them as good Friends to our Meeting's care.

Paul and Liberty were not able to attend this meeting, but are available to respond to questions and concerns.

Questions were raised about the ultimate ownership of the greenhouse that would be constructed, and ownership of the patent for the model. Members of the committee noted that this is an experimental project, more a "beta test" than a "prototype," so the goal is to test ideas and work towards a viable model. It was pointed out that the applicants have already distributed a brochure marketing this type of greenhouse, so they view it as a semi-commercial endeavor.

They have requested an ad hoc committee to work with them, some members of which have already been identified and have begun working with Paul and Liberty. One member clarified that what has been presented to us is a working draft, not the final application, and that Paul Klinkman already holds a patent that would be used for this project, so the issue of patent ownership is not for us to resolve.

4. Saylesville: Joanne Griffin reported that the preparative meeting is continuing discussion of repair or replacement of the heating system, and other repairs needed to the meetinghouse, in order to bring specific proposals to Property Committee. They also expect to meet again at the end of this month with Ministry & Counsel's oversight committee. She noted that there are several new attenders at the meeting. The candlelight Christmas Eve service was very well attended by Friends and community neighbors, and full of musical contributions.

5. No other business appearing, we closed with a period of silent worship at 1:00 pm, intending to meet next, God willing, on the 14th of 2nd month at the Providence meetinghouse.

Daniel Lederer, presiding clerk

Elizabeth Cazden, recording clerk

"Key Concepts of Quaker Decision-Making" - Arthur Larrabee's Jan 22 Discussion

It was a strong consensus by those who attended that Arthur Larrabee's discussion on "Key Concepts in Quaker Decision-Making" gave us all a better sense of the decision making process that we come to in the Quaker tradition. Illustrated with anecdotes from actual events that he has been witness to, and often been clerking at, his straightforward suggestions and observations about the process were made clear and easy to understand by their explanation in the context of those actual events.

Many of his key points involved being sensitive to and aware of the circumstances at any given moment. When addressing audiences that are not core faith groups, he can use the word 'energy' as a substitute for 'spirit'. To build community between the clerk and the meeting, he suggests that every clerk ask "What do you hope for from me as your clerk?"

In no particular order, vaguely organized, and with no claim of completeness, here are some statements and summaries of points he made:

Centering: As a topic leads to a meandering or tangential discussion, he will sometimes say "Let's settle for a few moments, to let us come back to our center." If that doesn't work, it may be time to stop for now and come back to the topic another time. The spirit of worship can come back by centering; the spirit of worship is the soil by which this process happens. A non-Quaker version would be to "watch out for when we've lost our ability to hear each other and see the bigger picture'.

A Clerk Can Help the Meeting: A sensitive clerk will know when to slow down if some people don't yet understand the topic or details or etc.

The Meeting Can Help a Clerk: A member can raise a hand and say "Clerk, I think we have lost our center, could you [center us]?" This should always be thru the clerk.

Committee Preparation: Beware having a larger body try to do committee's work. Thirty people cannot do a good job of editing a paragraph; that is to be done in a committee of 4 or 5, which will then bring it back to the larger group. The larger group can decide yes or no to something; if the answer is no in current form, it needs to go back to a smaller group to see if they can revise to incorporate the concerns expressed.

Sense of the Meeting: There are two similar phrases, the "Sense of the Meeting" (the outcome) and the "Sense-of-the-Meeting" (the process). A sense of the meeting outcome is an awareness of how the Spirit has moved among us. It may or may not contain within it a decision. The outcome may simply be a statement of how a matter was processed and produce a record that no specific action was taken.

He will use the term 'sense of the meeting', which does not mean the same as 'consensus'. The question "How has the spirit moved among us?" is answered by a sense of the meeting, which may include a diversity of views, and honors all that has been shared, but may still come to a decision.

Accommodating Concerns: In 1991 clerking his meeting in Philadelphia, after an 8 year process on a specific item, he said "I think there is a sense of the meeting that we are ready to move forward with this, even though there is a real sense of discomfort and diverse opinion." One opposed said "Clerk, this is not what I would do, but I recognize that this is the way that the spirit has moved among us, and I can support it."

At one time when two people were very opposed on a matter, Arthur would ask the meeting "There are two among us who are not clear about this – does the sense of the meeting feel the concerns carry enough spiritual weight to stay on this topic and not move forward with this?"

One option for a standoff is to ask "Do we need to embrace this impasse?" One could ask a concerned person "Would it satisfy the concern if the concern is entered in the minute?"

Group vs. Individual Sensibilities: Three different processes can be considered asked as: "How do we vote?", "What can we agree on?", and "How are we led?" There's a difference between asking "Do we agree about this?" and "How has the spirit moved among us?" Voting is a process where everyone hangs on to their own point of view. Quaker process encourages all to speak, and then to release to the greater sense of the meeting.

We look for Unity, not unanimity. When we have come to a shared awareness, we say we are in unity. Rather than "Can we agree on this policy?", we ask "Is there unity that the sense of the meeting is that we can adopt this policy?"

Hearing: Consider the difference between being heard and being agreed with. Often, being sure that we are heard is the more important of the two to an individual. If we move forward, we need to acknowledge the concerns. At some point it is good to state "Let me test to see if the sense of the meeting is to move forward while acknowledging concerns."

(notes and article Steve Schwartz)

Around the Meeting

Missing Red Swiss Army Knife – Bruce Carlsten writes: “On Sunday [Jan 10 or 17], I left my small red Swiss Army knife on the windowsill of the

dining room when attending to the window leak. When I went to look for it, it was gone. If anyone knows where it might be, please call me.

It was a favorite of mine.” On that day, Amy Steele had found it and was showing it and asking who it belonged to, and we think it was put in the lost

and found box. But if not yet returned and you see it, please contact Bruce.

Events Involving People From Meeting – Performances, etc.

Feb 2 – 26, URI - Betsy Zimmerman writes “I am part of an exciting group exhibit at URI through February 26. The opening was Tuesday Feb 2.”

New Nursery Room Staff Person – Sue Tully

On February 7, Sue Tully started as our new staff person in the Nursery. Please make her feel welcome when you have a chance.

Quaker Outreach Weekend at Woolman Hill April 29-May 1

Many of NEYM’s meetings are growing again! Friends engaged in Quaker Outreach are encouraged to apply for one of the remaining open spaces at a special weekend program at Woolman Hill. Participants will share ideas, celebrate successes, and discuss challenges with Friends from around the country. To apply for one of the limited spaces, tell NEYM about your interest, experience, and hopes for outreach in your meeting. For more information, contact Beth Collea, Religious Education & Outreach Coordinator 781-784-3471 recoord@neym.org

NEYM Student Scholarship Grants

New England Yearly Meeting is now offering grants to students of any age enrolled in post-secondary educational or professional training programs, whether full- or part-time. Awardees are eligible on the basis of spiritual connection to the Religious Society of Friends and participation in NEYM. This grant program has been established to purposefully disperse the funds of the former NEYM Student Loan program. You do not have to be a member of a monthly meeting to apply, but you must be committed to Friends’ principles and willing to share the role of Quakerism in your life. You should be able to describe in your personal essay what draws you to Quakerism, whether you are an attender or member of a meeting or otherwise connected to Friends. Your recommenders should be chosen carefully to speak to your commitment to Friends principles and your prior participation in the NEYM community. For more information and to apply, please visit NEYM’s website: <http://neym.org/quaker-grants>

All questions and correspondence may be sent to: studentgrants@neym.org

Application deadline is May 15, 2016.

Future Events – Events that recur and/or happen beyond the next month

[2015/16 unless noted, month in brackets indicates a recent issue that has an article about this event]

Mar 12-15 FCNL Spring Lobby Weekend (Washington DC) [Dec p4]

Mar. 18-20 Young Friends Retreats: Art, Creativity & the Joys of Childhood, Hartford Meeting, CT [Oct p5]

April 10 & 24 Conanicut Friends at Mabel's Studio – last two of the season [Oct p5]

April 15-17 Young Adult Friends Retreats: at Wellesley Meeting (MA) [Oct p5]

May 13-15 Young Friends Retreats: Community Service, Westport Meeting, MA [Oct p5]

June-July – Paid part time FCNL Summer Internship Program (Washington DC) [Dec p4]

Aug 2016 – July 2017 – Paid part and full time FCNL Advocacy and Young Fellows Programs (Washington DC) [Dec p4]

Saylesville as a Reminder of Quaker History *from Rose Cedroni*

"If you don't know your past you don't know your future" Ziggy Marley, "Tomorrow People"

There is so much history in the town of Lincoln and a genuine desire to share it. We are fortunate that the Meetinghouse is included in many of the events that reflect the town's enthusiasm for all things historical.

Sometimes it is a challenge to convey the history of the Meetinghouse - we don't want to overwhelm people and/or give them the impression that Quakerism is a quaint historical relic. On top of that we want to respect all religious views. We also want people to feel welcomed to join in our worship - but only if it feels right for them: some express amazement that anyone can sit in silence for a whole hour!

It is safe to say that most people are unaware of Quaker history - and they definitely do not have a sense of how seriously Quakers were persecuted in early America. It was the courageous Roger Williams that made Rhode Island a safe haven for Quakers to prosper. But that still did not make for a happy little community. Williams despised the Quakers and wasn't afraid to let anyone know it. He was slated for a debate with George Fox himself when Fox was visiting from England. Whether by accident or design, Fox never showed up, but Williams put up a good argument with the Quakers that did show up. Naturally Williams considered himself the "winner" and published a tract entitled "George Fox Digg'd out of his Burrowes". He wasn't about to let an insult fade from memory.

However, in all fairness, Williams kept to his principles and the Quakers were allowed to worship according to their conscience. It is a true lesson about maintaining passionate beliefs without devolving into violence. Sadly, this a lesson that still needs to be learned.

Beyond that, the very Meetinghouse itself is a visible reminder of the tenacity of our ancestors. Building a place of worship was a true labor of faith and love: after all, you couldn't just run to the hardware store when you needed more nails. It is always a joy to see the look on people's faces when they make that connection to the past. They have a greater respect for the people that came before them and hopefully a greater appreciation for everything they have now.

First Day School Quilting

First Day School created a quilt themed on gifts we can give that are not material. Each student created a painted square expressing his/her idea of a gift from the heart, and our member Ruth Bourns, textiles designer and fabricator, guided them to make the fine stitches to connect the top, the center warm layer and the backing. The quilt was the focus of FDS Christmas program and will hang in the Meeting upon completion.



CLERK'S CORNER by Dan Lederer

War Weariness

"Older men declare war. But it is the youth that must fight and die." Herbert Hoover

"Mankind must put an end to war before war puts an end to mankind." John F. Kennedy

Writing in the Providence Journal back in April, Jim Raftus explores the contention that Americans are weary of war: "With the exception of the nightmares of 9/11 and the 2013 Boston Marathon, our country has been spared the true horrors of modern war on our soil. So, when American citizens complain of being 'war weary' it is sadly ironic and dishonest. We get to sleep untroubled at night...."

What a contrast to Americans' experience during World War II, when there was conscription, rationing, and the expectation that everyone would share in the sacrifice in order to further the war effort. It was the rare person who didn't know someone who had been a casualty of battle, so the grim reality of war came home continually. Our direct involvement in the war lasted less the four years, but towards the end people felt genuine war weariness.

Now the candidates for president vie with each other over who can give the impression of being strongest, which of course translates into "I'm more willing than the other guy to send your children into battle." If some citizens are reluctant to go along with this because they're tired of war, these same politicians then try to draw on the fear of more incidents like what occurred in San Bernardino, knowing that fear can provide powerful motivation.

But we can't let all this discourage us Quakers from advocating for peace. Under the present circumstances, "war weariness" may be something of a sham, but it may provide an opportunity to persuade others of the futility of more military adventures. Raftus closes by writing, "If, however, we mean that we are finally weary after decades of participating, with no absolute moral imperative, in actions that destroy entire villages, towns, cities and countries while traumatizing, and perhaps radicalizing, entire generations of children, then that is a war weariness we should best heed and act upon."

Mayor Elorza to Speak *(cont from p1)*

We are also warned that if there is an emergency of any sort, the mayor will have to cancel. While not expected, it is possible. To that end, there will soon be a spot on the front page of our Website that will clearly give the status of this event. Please make sure that anyone you ask to come knows about this, so they can check as the day approaches. Our website is <http://providentfriends.org/>

Islamophobia Examined *(cont from p1)*

The meeting will be downstairs at the Meetinghouse, and I'm planning to bring some vegetarian food for the occasion—probably simple Bengali-style chickpeas and rice. Additional food would be welcome, if anyone is so inclined. I'm hoping that this first meeting will be focused on a discussion about the Muslim community's experiences with and perspectives on Islamophobia, as well as a brainstorming session for ideas about concrete steps we might take to work toward solutions.

I hope you'll be able to attend. Please bring your thoughts, your open heart, and perhaps a bite to share. (A brief etiquette note for women—as you may already know, it's considered incorrect for a Muslim man to shake hands with a woman. Given the Quaker proclivity for handshakes, I thought this might be a useful thing to mention. You can put your hand over your heart instead when meeting our guests.)

I'm looking forward to our meeting! Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions, ideas, etc.

Peace,

Jen McFadden 970-456-5642

Annual State of the Society Report Preparatory Worship Sharing *(cont from p1)*

to foster growth in the spiritual life. Reports may cover the full range of interests and concerns but should emphasize those indicative of the spiritual health of the meeting. Meetings may wish to consider one or more of the following:

Quality of worship and spiritual ministry - Efforts to foster spiritual growth - Stand taken on Friends' principles - Personal and family relations - Relations with community and other religious groups - Participation in general activities of Friends - Significant activities, outreach, or concerns of the local meeting; Youth of the meeting - Meeting community."

The State of the Society report relates to calendar year 2015. It is prepared by the monthly meeting and presented to monthly Meeting for Business. The report when approved is forwarded to the Quarterly Meeting and the Yearly Meeting. It may be helpful for Friends to review some of the activities that took place at Meeting during 2015. These included Friendly Eights, Meeting Movie Nights, the Bookswap at Saylesville (numerous occasions), a Nurturing the Nurturers potluck, a May Breakfast, the Quakerism 101 course, a Saylesville open house, the Saylesville Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, and our annual Christmas Gathering at the Providence Meetinghouse.

We will focus in our worship sharing on two queries suggested by NEYM's Ministry and Counsel Committee:

How is our meeting a community where we experience a depth of Divine Presence and transforming power?

How does our community's experience of the Divine ground and nurture our actions in the world?

These suggested guidelines for worship sharing are paraphrased from Friends General Conference:

Reach as deeply as possible into the sacred center of your life - Speak out of the silence and leave a period of silence between speakers - Speak from your own experience and about your own experience rather than praise or refute what someone else has said - Listen carefully to what is said - Expect to speak only once until everyone has had a chance to speak; and - Respect the confidentiality of what is shared.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Dan Lederer

Providence Monthly Meeting - Contacts

Providence Meeting (401) 331-4218 <http://providencelfriends.org>
99 Morris Avenue, Providence, RI 02906

Presiding Clerk: Dan Lederer clerk@providencelfriends.org

Assistant Presiding Clerk: Abigail Mansfield Marcaccio

assistclerk@providencelfriends.org

Recording Clerk: Betsy Cazden recordingclerk@providencelfriends.org

Treasurer: Peter Swaszek treasurer@providencelfriends.org

Ministry & Counsel: David Bourns ministryandcounsel@providencelfriends.org

Pastoral Care Committee: Phebe Howland pastoralcare@providencelfriends.org

Finance: Mike Hirtle finance@providencelfriends.org

Peace & Social Concerns: Mark Conley peaceandsocial@providencelfriends.org

Social & Hospitality: Dede Carlsten and Kim Wiegand

socialandhospitality@providencelfriends.org

Religious Education: Betsy Zimmerman

religioused@providencelfriends.org

Communications: Dan Lederer communications@providencelfriends.org

Program Committee: Nina Berry program@providencelfriends.org

Marriage Clearness: Erin Hazlett marriage@providencelfriends.org

Library: Rebecca Smith library@providencelfriends.org

Archive: archivist@providencelfriends.org

Property: Bob Elliott property@providencelfriends.org

Funeral & Burial: Matt Hackman funeralandburial@providencelfriends.org

Newsletter: Steve Schwartz providentfriend@providencelfriends.org

Email list moderator: Dan Lederer list@providencelfriends.org

Website: webclerk@providencelfriends.org

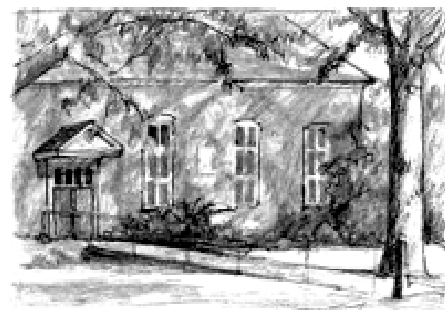
Moses Brown School Liaison: Mike Hirtle liaison@providencelfriends.org

Young Adult Friends: (To Be Named) yaf@providencelfriends.org

To schedule the Meetinghouse: Bruce Shaw scheduling@providencelfriends.org

AFSC SENE: Martha Yager (508) 399-6699 or myager@afsc.org or

www.afsc.org/sene



Elizabeth Bonner Zimmerman

Newsletter of
Providence Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of
Friends

(401) 331-4218 or <http://providencefriends.org>

Meeting for Worship each Sunday

Providence: 10:00 am Saylesville: 10:30 am
Conanicut (Middletown) 10:30 am (NBS/Mabel's Studio)
Feb 14, 28 Mar 13, 27

First Day School, Providence - Sunday. Children join Meeting for Worship from 10:00-10:15 am and then proceed to First Day School from 10:15-11:00 am.

Other Meetings for Worship (All welcome):

Monday - 12:30pm - Moses Brown Upper School

Tuesday - 7pm - Young Adult Friends

. (yaf@providencefriends.org)

Wednesday - 8:25am - Moses Brown Lower School

Wednesday - 9:40am - Moses Brown Middle School

Wednesday - 10-11:30am 2nd & 4th Wed's - Saylesville

Thursday - Noon-12:45 pm Brown University in
J. Walter Wilson room 411

Potluck, Providence - each First Sunday

Sing-along, Saylesville – 11:30 am each First Sunday

Meeting for Business

Providence: Second Sunday of each month at 12:00pm

Saylesville: Second Sunday of each month at 9:30am

AFSC SENE Support Committee - Second Tuesday, 6:30-9:00 pm
Volunteers needed and welcome.
Call (508) 399-6699



Feb 6 Evening Snow



The Provident FRIEND

Newsletter of
Providence Monthly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends
99 Morris Avenue
Providence, RI 02906